

PAC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 16, 2009

PAC Executive in Attendance: Nandita Narayan, Rhylin Bailie, Ann Einstein, Zena Kwan, Jen Mezei

Regrets: Denise Hayhurst

Meeting Commenced 7:03pm

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE MINUTES

- June AGM minutes have been approved Rhylin 1st, Zena 2nd

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Nandita introduced herself, thanked last year's Executive
- Introduced this year's Executive members
- Vacant positions: Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chair, Canadian Parents for French rep
- Reminder that babysitting is provided for meetings, free of charge

NEW LIBRARIAN

- Ms Higgins introduced herself
- Ms Higgins speaks limited French but has excellent French comprehension, she was a French immersion parent, her two kids and her husband are bilingual
- Start-up taking a little longer because it's her first year here
- Not too many changes, but she's reorganizing a little bit and does need time to get organized
- Still new students coming in, so once the classes are set she takes that class information and she gets a list of students that she needs to make library cards for
- French Book Fair next week, English Book Fair in December, really appreciates the parent assistance with that
- Reading Club will hopefully go out next week, hopes to have good participation. Basically the same as last year, passport book that gets signed off, get a little reward, etc.
- October 26 is National School Library Day, Ms Higgins will have a "drop everything and read" time in the school, probably at 1:00. Teachers are hoping parents will come in and read with their children at that time

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- At the end of last year, after all the fundraising that happened, the PAC approved a number of purchases
 - PAC agreed to purchase Sound Field systems for five classrooms
 - These systems are meant for all students, not just students with a hearing impairment
 - Helps all students hear with clarity no matter where they're sitting
 - Five systems installed last year, teachers found the results were excellent
 - Positive feedback from parents as well

- Because of that teachers requested additional systems, so PAC approved the purchase of four additional Sound Systems, which will be purchased in the next couple of weeks
 - We are the only school in Burnaby that has these systems, we'll have nine
 - Used in every primary class in West Vancouver
 - Only installed in classrooms where the teachers have committed to using them all the time
 - Initially had 11 teacher requests. May have additional requests this year after the teachers see how successful they are
 - The company is coming in next week to give training, talk about additional benefits to the systems
- We are the best equipped elementary school in Burnaby with regards to technology
 - Full computer lab, two laptop carts with 15 laptops
 - Bought a digital camcorder last year, letting the kids learn about digital video
 - We bought a Mac book for multimedia purposes
 - 10 more digital cameras, headsets
 - Color laser printers
 - Smartboard on wheels –like a touch screen computer
 - \$2000 of Special Needs software – writing, reading comp, voice recorder (dragon speak)
 - Tech committee of parents and teachers set direction in response to changing needs of school community
 - Ministry has been cutting back in many areas including Learning Assistance
 - Greater demands for resources in the school than in the past
- Fundraising was also spent on earthquake supplies
 - Heaters
 - Food supplies
 - Generators
 - Medical supplies
 - Hope to have full-fledged earthquake drill in the spring
 - District provided cord, rope, shovel, 3 hammers and 6 hardhats, 10x20ft tarp
- Letter from teachers thanking PAC for financial support
- Dec 16 & 17 Winter concert (odd divisions on Wednesday and even divisions on Thursday)
 - Need volunteers to help tear down the stages
 - There will be no Halloween concert
- H1N1 news
 - Health Ministry said last spring had to meet three criteria to close. Now they've said schools will only close in the case of a severe outbreak, with no other definition beyond that. Public health no longer required to tell a school if a child has H1N1. So it gives them lots of leeway to choose to close or not close a school.
 - Right now the ministry feels the virus will be so wide spread that there's really not much you can do. Last year pregnant teachers could request a move for a certain period of time to avoid the virus. This year such a request will not be granted because the virus will be so pervasive, even if they move to another school they can be exposed.

- One round of vaccinations will be out in October for regular flu season. H1N1 vaccines will be out in November, possibly earlier. They say there will be vaccines available for all Canadians that want one.
- It's possible that the students may be able to get the H1N1 vaccine at school, but only with consent from parents.
- There's more information on the District website.
- School has said if your child is sick, keep them at home. If kids come to school with flu symptoms, the school will make every attempt to contact parents to have them come and get their child, but can't guarantee that the child will be picked up.
- District has decided not to put hand sanitizers in school because of cost, but there are reminders around the school for kids to wash their hands, cough into their sleeves, etc.
- Some school districts have banished the hand sanitizer solution because of environmental concerns. Burnaby has not made that decision yet, so it's possible the PAC could choose to purchase hand sanitizers if they want to. Would have to run that past the Burnaby district.
- Class placements
 - The first two weeks have been extremely busy. Keith has been handling a number of issues, lots of questions about classroom placements, usual concerns and questions from parents. The teachers spent a lot of time considering the best placement for kids. Their primary concern is how to place kids so they'll have the best education opportunity.
 - Parents are advocates for their own children, but are not familiar with the educational requirements of the whole class, with the interactions between kids.
 - In April or so the school district tells the school how many teachers they'll get the following year. Then we get an estimate of how many kids are in each grade level. There are minimum and maximum class sizes, plus a maximum number of special needs kids per class, etc.
 - For many grades there aren't enough kids for three full classes, so we have to make all these split classes. Last year in Burnaby over 80% of classes were split. At Seaforth we've made an effort to maximize the number of full classes, because we know that's what parents want to see. This year there are seven full classes, so only 66% are split. At some other schools every single class is split.
- Seaforth's Gifted program
 - According to Ministry guidelines, 2% of the entire population is considered "gifted"
 - For a school like Seaforth where we have 520 kids, 2% works out to 10 kids who should technically be labeled as gifted
 - We have 9% of our kids Ministry designated as gifted. They get that through a test that our resource teacher provides, and they have to score over 99% average in 2 of 3 categories. At other schools they will designate kids at 90 or 95%, or based on teacher recommendations.
 - There are schools in Burnaby that have 0 gifted kids
 - Besides Ministry designated kids, we have a high percentage of "high achieving" kids. These are straight A kids that are hard workers, good students, etc., but they're not "gifted" by the testing or evaluation. At any other school, however they would be labeled as gifted

- Mrs Kang is reassessing kids. We have about 45 kids that have been designated as gifted (9%). But in the Challenge program we have 69 kids. Mrs Kang was trying to support those high achieving kids as well. She's trying to provide a program for a large number of kids that are high achieving and gifted. We're trying to do that with Ministry funding that's for 10 kids. Seaforth has the most extensive gifted program in the district because we dedicate time for these types of students
- District is starting a Primary Gifted Program. Only one Seaforth student is going to that program. One of the criteria that the district used was "which students' needs aren't being met at the school level." Because our gifted program is so extensive, we meet the needs of most of our primary kids, so they only took one. So that looks kind of bad because we have a huge gifted population yet only one of our kids got to go. Good that we're meeting their needs, but that means our kids didn't get to go into this special program. But the district program is new, we don't know how successful it will be, whereas we know that our Seaforth program is very successful.

JEN MEZEI – DPAC REP

- Attended the 18th Biennial Conference on Gifted and Talented Children (Aug 3-7)
- Hundreds of workshops and sessions ranging from very specific practices to broad theory
- Good networking opportunity to gauge where Burnaby District policies are most aligned in terms of scope and philosophy, and to talk to teaching and administrative staff from Canada and United States about challenges and successes in implementing programs
- Burnaby's development of the Twice Exceptional Program at the secondary level is considered a pioneer program in the delivery of a program to address the para-academic needs of Gifted / Learning Disabled students
- Material most applicable to Burnaby School District:
 - Identification/Assessment
 - Identifying culturally diverse learners, including non-English speaking Gifted learners
 - Need non-verbal ability tests, ability vs achievement tests
 - Application/Classroom models
 - Examined current applications used in other districts
 - School pull-out versus separate district program
 - Policy/Advocacy
 - Characteristics of US programs that work
 - What is effective advocacy?
 - Gifted underachievement
 - Risk factors to underachievement
 - Increasing engagement and self-motivation/responsibility for learning
 - Mentoring
 - Toolkit for effective learning (organizational skills, time management, leadership/intrapersonal skills, social/interpersonal skills, study skills)
 - Gifted/Learning Disabled
 - Twice Exceptional 2E students (gifted but also learning disabled) and why they're at risk
 - Relationship between personality characteristics, IQ and anxiety
 - Parent Resources

- World Gifted Parent Association
- Canadian Gifted Parent Association

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Rhylin Bailie and Adrienne Dall'Antonia are co-Treasurers until the position is filled
- Changes from last year
 - Split budget into General Operations and Gaming
 - Only certain expenses qualify for Gaming – must be tangible items (computers, benches, equipment) or educational events
 - Gaming funds cut in half from \$20 per student to \$10 per student (\$10,000 to \$5,000) so moved most items into General Operations
- Current balances
 - Gaming \$30 (don't have grant \$\$ yet)
 - General \$5332 (hot lunch \$\$ coming soon)
- Carry forwards from 2008/2009
 - Tried to get rid of all carry forwards – problem in previous years
 - Do have one carry forward for earthquake container for \$7431. Have spent \$3805 so far this year so \$3625 left to spend
- Budget overview
 - Approved budget at June AGM (see explanatory sheet if you're interested)
 - Note that \$7431 earthquake carry-forward is not a true budgeted item
 - Noteworthy changes to budget from 2008/2009
 - \$1,200 to bring in educational student presentations every year (this is in addition to the \$1,500 budgeted for parent presentations)
 - \$1,500 added to fine arts budget to purchase vests for the school choirs (so they have a "uniform" when they're performing)
 - \$3,000 to purchase items for the earthquake container

CHANGES TO BUDGET

- Because of cut to Gaming funds, need to cut approx \$2000 from budget
 - Suggested changes:
 - Get rid of choir vests (\$1,500)
 - Reduce Noon Hour Activities by \$200 (budgeted for \$1600, spent \$1000 last year)
 - Get rid of Games Club (\$300 – wasn't used last year, Challenge teacher going on mat leave)
- Request for Library
 - Scholastic Book Fair proceeds are just to purchase books
 - New librarian has requested library carpets for kids to sit around during story time (\$500) and book cart (\$400)
 - Currently have \$1000 for Teacher Seminars that teachers rarely use – recommend transferring this to Library
- Motion passed to eliminate purchase of choir vests (\$1500), eliminate Games Club (\$300) and reduce Noon Hour Activities by \$200 – Rishma 1st, Elsie 2nd
- Motion passed to use \$1000 currently allocated for Teacher Seminars for Library purchases instead – Rishma 1st, Zena 2nd

DONATION POLICY

- School gets funding based on the number of students enrolled at Sept 30
- Could we charge for Santa's Breakfast? Decided we'd rather not, since it's such a lovely event for the kids. Might suggest donations, though.
- \$30 in cheque donations goes to the school, not into PAC funds. Discussion on whether to increase the request from \$30 to a higher number, but it wouldn't change the situation of a shortfall in the PAC coffers
- Suggestion to offer people a choice to donate directly to the PAC, but donation forms have already printed and included in Welcome Package to go home tomorrow, so will not amend donation form at this time
- Will revisit this later in the spring. Perhaps when we have a concrete fundraising goal (after hearing from Technology and Earthquake committees) we can offer people the choice to donate directly to the PAC to help meet these goals.

FUNDRAISING

- Fundraising events
 - Organising fundraisers is all volunteer based – need bodies to make it successful
 - Do we want to have more, smaller fundraisers rather than just the big Carnival or Silent Auction?
 - Might get new volunteers, some people would be excited about organizing pub night or movie night but don't want to be part of the carnival committee
 - Call them "community events" rather than "fundraisers" so people don't feel like we're constantly asking for \$\$
 - Do we want to amend the operating policy to allow for more fundraisers during the year?
 - Risk is that we're opening it up for other groups, such as Grade 7 Grad, to want to do more than one fundraiser
- Hot Lunch
 - Could Hot Lunch people do additional stuff, such as selling gift cards, etc?
 - Would like to add additional Hot Lunch days but need so much help to pull it off
 - Possibility of bringing in a company that delivers lunches, but do they meet the nutrition guidelines, and what is the profit margin? Parents apparently order online, and the company delivers right to the classroom, so very little work for hot lunch ladies.
 - **Action item** - Rishma will look into the possibility of adding extra hot lunch days with this new company, and selling gift cards
- Corporate Partnerships
 - We can get corporate sponsorship, can "thank" the corporation on our website
 - Corporations may want to have us as an educational partner because of the school's status in the province
 - PAC could have a say in how the money is spent
 - **Action item** – For a Corporate Partnership Committee

PAC HOUSEKEEPING

- Nandita will send out a newsletter, summarizing PAC meeting, soliciting ideas for fundraising, forming an educational partnership committee, etc.

- If we list some big ticket items for fundraising, such as requests from technology committee, earthquake committee, upgrading playground, covering courtyard, etc., may elicit new interest for sponsorship and fundraising

NEED VOLUNTEERS

- Traffic safety coordinator
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- CPF rep

Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm